

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 141345Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8797

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 0378

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM CHARGE'

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ETRD, EFIN, RQ, TD, US

SUBJECT: TRINIDADIAN-PUERTO RICAN CONTACT

REF: STATE 006572 (NOTAL)

1. PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS FEB 13 INFORMALLY GAVE ME SPECIFIC GOTT PROPOSAL FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH PUERTO RICAN OFFICIALS. HE INDICATED HE WOULD SEND ME FORMAL CABINET PAPER IN A FEW DAYS WITH MORE DETAILS.

2. SCENARIO DESCRIBED REFTEL IS CONFIRMED, EXCEPT THAT WILLIAMS WANTS MEETING TO BE HELD IN TRINIDAD. HE UNDERSTANDS THAT GOVERNOR HERNANDEZ COLON WOULD THUS PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO COME, BUT HOPES GOVERNOR WILL SEND SECRETARY OF STATE ALBORS. GOTT SIDE WILL CONSIST OF MINISTERS MAHABIR (INDUSTRY & COMMERCE, PETROLEUM & MINES) AND JOSEPH (EXTERNAL AFFAIRS), ASSISTED BY SEVERAL TECHNICAL LEVE PERSONNEL.

3. PUERTO RICAN DELEGATION (INCLUDING USG PARTICIPANT -- I HAVE NEVER MENTIONED YOUR NAME PERSONALLY AS A CONFIDENTIAL

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POSSIBILITY) WOULD BE GUESTS OF GOTT.

4. DATES PROPOSED ARE ANY TIME IN WEEK OF MARCH 7, PROBABLY LASTING TWO DAYS. NO DIRECT PUBLICITY.

5. WILLIAMS APOLOGIZED FOR LONG DELAY IN PROPOSING SPECIFIC DATES, BUT EMPHASIZED THAT CABINET HAD FELT MEETING SHOULD NOT OCCUR NEAR JAN 24 DATE OF CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (CDB) GOVERNORS MEETING SINCE GOTT ACTION COULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD BY CARICOM COLLEAGUES. THEN CARNIVAL SEASON FOLLOWED AND SECOND WEEK OF MARCH IS IMMEDIATELY AFTER CARNIVAL.

6. WITH REGARD TO CDB MEETING, WILLIAMS SAID THAT SEVERAL OF MEMBER STATES HAD STRONGLY OPPOSED PUERTO RICAN MEMBERSHIP. IT WAS GOTT GOAL TO HAVE PUERTO RICO IN BANK AND TO DELAY OR DEFER FURTHER MEMBERSHIP ACCESSIONS FROM OUTSIDE THE CARIBBEAN T&T VOTING STRENGTH IN THE BANK HAD BEEN SUFFICIENT AT THE JAN 24 MEETING TO REACH A STALEMATE ON THESE ISSUES FOR THE TIME BEING BUT NOT TO GET DEFINITIVE ACTION IN CONFORMITY WITH GOTT WISHES. HE WAS NOT UNHAPPY WITH THIS STALEMATE, BECAUSE IT NOW ALLOWED TIME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TRINIDAD AND PUERTO RICO WHICH HOPEFULLY WOULD LEAD TO DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WOULD CONVINCE CARICOM PARTNERS THAT PUERTO RICAN MEMBERSHIP IN CDB WAS NATURAL AND PROPER.

7. REQUESTED TIMING OF PUERTO RICAN MEETING WAS SIGNIFICANT, WILLIAMS STATED, IN ANOTHER SENSE. THERE WILL BE IMPORTANT CARICOM MEETINGS IN TRINIDAD MARCH 18-25 (OFFICIALS MEET TO DISCUSS FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FINANCE, AND FOOD COOPERATION) AND MARCH 26-27 (CARICOM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, PRIMARILY TO DISCUSS UNIVERSITY OF WEST INDIES). WILLIAMS QUIPPED THAT HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING WAS BEING HELD IN TRINIDAD BECAUSE HIS COUNTERPARTS SAID THIS WAS THE ONLY PLACE THEY COULD MEET AND BE SURE HE WOULD ATTEND. IN ANY CASE, HE IMPLIED THAT HE WOULD WANT TO DISCUSS WITH OTHER CARICOM LEADERS THE OUTLOOK AFTER THE PRELIMINARY GOTT-PR MEETING AND THUS IT WOULD BE HIGHLY USEFUL TO HAVE THE CONTACT BEFORE THE CARICOM MEETING.

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8. WILLIAMS REFERRED TO A PRESS REPORT IN CARACAS NEWSPAPER EL MUNDO FEBRUARY 10 ALLEGING THAT AN IMPORTANT CARIBBEAN MEETING WOULD BE HELD IN TRINIDAD IN MARCH INCLUDING CUBA AND A MEMBER OF OTHER COUNTRIES. HE ASSURED ME THAT THE ONLY MEETING SCHEDULED WERE THE CARICOM MEETINGS, AND THAT CUBA WAS DEFINITELY NOT INVITED, NOT EVEN AS AN OBSERVER.

9. AS PROPOSED AGENDA FOR THE TALKS WITH PR OFFICIALS,

WILLIAMS SAID THAT, IN ADDITION TO GENERAL DISCUSSION, GOTT WISHED SPECIFICALLY TO DISCUSS TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION. WHILE MORE DETAILS WILL BE INCLUDED IN WRITTEN DOCUMENT TO BE PROVIDED ME NEXT WEEK, I GATHER THAT GOTT INTENDS TO DISCUSS POTENTIAL COMMODITIES IN WHICH TRADE COULD BE EXPANDED, SOME EXPORTS FROM PUERTO RICO AND SOME EXPORTS FROM TRINIDAD, INCLUDING QUESTION OF RUM. ALSO, GSP, NON-TARIFF BARRIERS, AND INVESTMENT WOULD BE RAISED. ON THE TRANSPORTATION SIDE, GOTT WISHES TO DISCUSS BOTH AIR AND SEA TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING PORT PROCEDURES, PORT UNIONIZED LABOR REGULATIONS, HARMONIZATION OF PROCEDURES, ETC.
RICH

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